

18

*THE MATCHING*  
OF THE  
**Magistrates Authority,**  
AND  
*THE CHRISTIANS TRUE LIBERTY*  
IN  
Matters of **R E L I G I O N.**

Wherein is clearly stated, How farre the Ma-  
gistrate may impose or restrain in matters  
of **F A I T H** and **V V O R S H I P**,  
And how far forth the Christian may challenge  
Freedome and Exemption.

In a Sermon preached at the Assizes at  
**D O R C H E S T E R**, Jul. 17. 1651.

---

By **W I L L I A M L Y F O R D B. D.** and late  
Minister of *Sherborn in Dorset.*

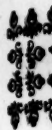
---

\*\*\*\*\*



---

**L O N D O N,**  
Printed by **J. G. for R. ROYSTON,** at the  
*Angel in Ivie-Lane. 1654.*



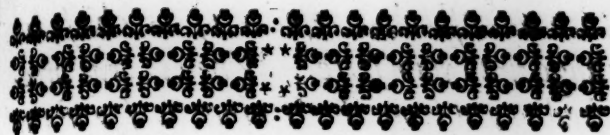
TO  
SIN

Most



grea  
not  
enjo  
form  
riffe  
fort  
you  
been  
shon

07:3996



TO THE HONOURABLE,  
Sir GERARD NAPPER,  
Knight and Baronet.

Most Honoured S I R,

**T**He World doth much call for  
this little worke of my Fathers,  
who is now with God. And the  
Communion of Saints being so  
great a part of our most holy Faith, I dare  
not keep it back from any Christian mans  
enjoyment; Yet it being a piece, which was  
formed in your service, while you were She-  
riffe of Dorset-shire, I refuse to send it  
forth but with your cognizance, and under  
your Patronage. It is just, that having  
beene borne, as it were, in your house, it  
should not become the propertie of others,  
A 2 without

without a speciall reserve of its chiefe homage unto your selfe. When it was preached to you from the Pulpit, it found your great acceptance: I hope it shall finde as great, now it salutes you from the Presse. And if it shall be still as welcome to your eye as it was then unto your eare, it will much encourage me to inherite as well my Fathers affections to you as his name, and to let you see, that though he be dead, yet there is still alive

Most honour'd Sir,

Your faithfull and humble Servant,

WILL: LYFORD

From my Study in  
Mag. Coll. Oxon.  
Octob. 22. 1653.





D A N. 3. 14. to 18.

*Is it true ô S H A D R A C H, &c.*

These two things, *The Truths of Christ*, and *Peace among Brethren*, ought to be precious to every Son of the Church. 'Twas a blessed time when the multitude of *Believers* were of *one heart*, and *one Soule*, when they held Communion in Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and Prayers, they heard together, they received together, they prayed together; and according to this primitive Patterne, all good Christians should endeavour to walk, and those Churches are happy which hold that blessed knot of Truth and Love: Contrary whereunto are those two reigning evils among us at this day, viz. *Wantonnesse of Spirit*, and *Pride of Spirit*; Through the wantonnesse of mens spirits craving an absolute liberty in matters of God, the sacred Truths of God are corrupted and vilified; And through the Pride of mens spirits on the other hand, imposing matters of Opinion and Worship under temporall penalties, the Quiet of mens Consciences, and Unity among Brethren is exceedingly disturbed and unsettled. There is much evill in both extreames, either that all things should be tolerated, or Nothing; that Nothing should be restrained, or that All things should be imposed, and rigidly enforced under temporall inflictions; the one leads to Heresie and Atheisme, the other to Persecution. Now to shape a course out of Gods Word: 1. How the sacred Truths of God, and the precious Souls of Men, (those great truths committed to our charge.) And 2. How the just Liberty of Conscience (for I meddle not without my line) with due reverence to Authority may be preserved pure and blamelesse, is the scope of my ensuing discourse, unto which ends I shall endeavour to drive with all clearnesse, Christian Moderation and Sobriety, from the words now read in your eares.

Whether *Nebuchadnezzar* did erect this huge Statue of such a vast cost (for it was of God) and bignesse (60. cubits high) out of ambition and vaine-glory, as a Monument of his Greatnesse and Magnificence, -- or out of Blinde Zeale to his God *Bell*, to whom it was dedicated, -- or out of Policy to bring all his Dominions and People to an Uniformity in Religion and Worship, the better to prevent Dissentions and Divisions in his Kingdome, which might be occasioned by the exercise of the Jewes Religion now scattered amongst them? Whether all, or any of these things might move him, I determine not; But most likely it is, that there was something of Designe in it, for the Princes of *Babylon*, seeing their Greatnesse and Glory eclipsed by Strangers and Captives, moved with Envy and Indignation, advised the King to such a specious Action of Devotion, whereby they might intrap, and work the ruine of those Jewish Commanders, for *ver. 12.* they informe against *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*, that *these men have not regarded thee o King, they serve not thy Gods, nor worship the Golden Image which thou hast set up*: Upon this information *Nebuchadnezzar* sends for them, and bespeaks them in the words of my Text, *Is it true O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my Gods, nor worship the Image which I have set up?* q. d. I should least of all men expected this from you, you, who are at my mercy, you that have been so highly advanced by me: He used them civilly (as the Phrase is) yet cruelly, he did not presently condemne them till he had heard their defence, and in his speech he did seeke to win them, as unwilling to believe it to be true, which was informed, *Is it true O Shadrach, that you do not serve my Gods*, *ver. 14.* perhaps it was an over-sight, or some needlesse scruple in you, or a mis-information to me, I shall be willing to passe it by, if now at last you will conforme; Take time to consider of it; But if you persist, I cannot help you, you must be cast into the fiery Furnace, for so is the Law, *ver. 15.* Then followes their Answer, *ver. 16, 17. We are not carefull to answer thee in this matter*, as if they should say, your Majesty is not mis-informed, we did not worship your Gods, and the truth is, we cannot, we are sufficiently advised and resolved in this matter, we crave no farther

farther time for consultation ; And whereas you threaten us with Death for our refusal, this is no satisfaction to our Conscience, nor discharge of our Duty, we are not moved with thy threatnings, we are ready to sacrifice our lives to the will and command of our God, rather than our Conscience, or Religion to thy will : It is a poor Religion, and a poor God, that is not worth the dying for. And if our God see cause by this meanes to call for our lives, we are contented to pay a debt of Nature in a debt of Duty ; and yet we know that he can deliver us from thy Fornace, if it seeme good unto him, but if not, we cannot gratifie thee in this matter, *We will not serve thy Gods*, we rather yeild our bodies, and Gods will be done.

In which Conference note two remarkable Acts,

1. One of the King, enjoying an Act of Worship upon men of a different judgement, and those, poore Captives, under the sharpest penaltie.

2. The other of the poor vanquished Captives, their refusal, chusing rather to suffer, than to sin against God, resolving in the way of Dutie to trust God with their lives, *ver. 16, 17, 18.*

Sundry particulars are observable, but I shall reduce the whole into 2. Doctrines.

1. Though the civill power hath much to do in matters of Religion, yet it may not compell, or enforce under temporall penalties to an Act of Worship, either in it selfe evill, or evill in the judgement of him upon whom it is imposed : [*Nebuchadnezzar sets up an Image, requires a Worship to it under pain of death : This was ill in him, and the like is ill in any man else.*] Doctr. 1.

D.2. From their Answ. is this, To cleave to Gods will and ways Doctr. 2. against all humane dread and terror, out of a confident perswasion that God is Lord of our lives, able to deliver, and in an humble resignation to his wisdom whether he will deliver or not in such a strait, is a strength of spirit to be endeavoured after by all that feare God and would keep a good conscience : Thus did these three men.

I begin with the first Doctrine: Though the Civill Power, &c. This Doctr. 1.

This Truth is evidenced by the Repentance of *Nebuchadnezzar*, v. 28. *Blessed be God that hath changed the Kings word*: By this Retractation he condemns his former crueltie. Note that passage of *Pauls* Repentance recorded, *Acts* 26. 11. *I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme*: It was a great weaknesse in them to blaspheme, but it was a great wickednesse in *Paul* to<sup>r</sup> compell them; and thus much *S. Paul* confesseth, that it is an Act of Persecution to compell poor Christians to deny what they believed concerning *Jesus Christ*.

Obj. *It may be said, S. Paul sinned because he compelled to that which was evil (as here Nebuchadn. did) else he needed not to repent of what he had done.*

Sol. 1. That which he did, was not evil in the judgement of Authority; for *verse* 10. Saint *Paul* had a Commission so to do.

2. Nor was it evil in the judgement of his owne Conscience, for he verily thought, that he ought to doe many things against the name of *Jesus*, *ver.* 9. The evill of his acting therefore did not lie only in the Object whereunto he compelled, but in the very act of compelling Christians to go against their owne Consciences.

3. To put the sinfulness of compelling upon the Object, is altogether unsatisfactory, for the question will still recur, who shall judge of the right? Is not every Power judge of its owne right? They that think it just to compell others to yeild to an unknown truth, or duty, will think it hard to be compelled to a like unknown duty by a contrary Power; And yet Error in Power, thinks it hath as much right to a forcible imposition, as Truth hath when it is in Power.

Sol. 4. Note from this Confession of *S. Paul* two things,

1. That an erring Conscience does not excuse in case of misactings; Perswasion of Conscience is not the ground, nor prime rule of mens actings, (for the Conscience it selfe must be regulated, else it will be a false witnessse of God. As Conscience is set between God and us, so it must speak from God to us, not from Satan, or any Spirit of delusion.) Saint *Paul* verily thought he ought to doe many things contrary to the Name of *Jesus*, yet was he not thereby excused; he did it not

in malice, but his erring conscience put him upon that action, which was damnable.

2, Note, that the plea of authority is not a sufficient discharge before God, for *Paul* had Commission for what hee did. But he and his Commission were wicked, and I believe that many are and may be damned for their misactings, though they have authority for what they do, yea, though they be also in conscience perswaded that they do nothing but what is good, as the *Jewes* that crucified Christ, and they of whom Christ speaks *Joh. 13. 3.* *He that kills you, will thinke they do God good service:* *Paul* had been damned for his persecuting, unless hee had repented, though he did it ignorantly.

Thus for the prooffe in generall, There be two Branches of our Doctrine. 1. That the Civill Magistrate may do much in matters of Religion. 2. Yet not this, *viz.* to impose under temporall penalties; There be two extremes, some thinke the Magistrate has nothing to do in matters of Religion; others, that he may do what hee list. Some claime an absolute freedome from all Civill Power, as being for matter of Faith and Worship under Christ your King alone. Others challenge to the Magistrate a Power of imposing the publikely owned and established Religion: The one is too loose, the other too rigid.

The right or wrong apprehending and executing of this practicall point is of great good, or great mischief to the Church of Christ: therefore for distinct proceeding, I shall endeavor to resolve these two Questions [ 1. *What the Civill Magistrate has to doe in matters of Religion,* [ 2. *What he may not doe.*

To the former, it is very much that the Civill Magistrate *Qu. 1.* may and ought to doe for Christ; for though the Magistrates be not Christs Officers of his Mediatory Kingdome, as the Ministers of the Gospell are; The Civill Power is a Beame of Gods Sovereignty over the World, and of his providentiall Kingdome, not directly of his Kingdome of grace, yet all power is committed unto Christ, and God has appointed the exercise of his power governing the World, to be serviceable to the advancement of the Kingdome of his deare Son, and to the setting of him upon his holy Hill, according to that gracious  
B promise

Psalme 2. 10.

promise made to the Churches of the *Gentiles*. *Es.* 49. 23. *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers.* Though they be not Fathers to beget thee, yet they shall be Fathers to nurse thee up, they shall carry thy Sonnes and thy daughters in their Armes (i.e.) they shall contribute their aid and assistance for the upholding and encreasing of the Church; And the Nation and Kingdome that will not serve thee, (when this Kingdom of Jesus Christ comes to be revealed to them) He will require it at your hands, they shall perish. *Es.* 60. 12. "From this Unction it is, that Magistrates are bound to serve Christ, as Magistrates, that is, use their civill power to serve Christs Kingdome: The administration of Civill Justice is not sufficient to give them the title of nursing Fathers (for so much the *Turk* at this day doth yeild them, and yet he is no Nurse Father to the Church.) But the Civill Power is to be used for the Churches spirituall good. *1 Tim.* 2. 2. The Object and end of the Kings Power, is not onely the externall peace of humane society, but also honesty and godlinesse to be procured by his Civill coactive Power, and for this cause *Paul* willeth us to pray for Kings, and all that are in authority. Here's the *quod sit*, that the Magistrate may do much: how much that is, will appeare in these foure Conclusions.

4. Conc.

1. Propagation.

1. For propagation of Religion and truth of Jesus Christ; It is his duty to take care that the Gospell be preached to all the people committed to his charge and governance, thus *Jehosaphat* sent Princes and Priests to teach in all the Cities of *Judah*. *2 Chron.* 17. 8. 9. It is a most fond device to make a distinction between the Kings of *Judah*, and Christian Princes, for what the one did by virtue of their Office, the same, the other ought to doe, by virtue of the same Office, if there be no particular exception or limitation; God enjoynes our obedience to Christian Magistrates as well as unto them, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every soule be subject, &c.* And the Scripture enjoying the duty of the subject, doth establish the authority of the Christian Magistrate (for they are Relatives.)

2. Protection. duty to protect Gods Truth, worship, and service in the exercise thereof against all violence and affronts. And for this purpose,

pose, he is to take care for the maintenance and countenance of Ministers who are to give attendance to that worke, thus *Hezekiah* spake comfortably unto all the *Levites* that taught the good knowledge of God. *2 Chron. 30. 22.* He did also appoint the people to Minister sustenance unto them. *2 Chron. 31. 4.* He appointed his own portion. Moreover he commanded the people to give the portion of the Priests that they might be encouraged in the Law of the Lord, and they brought in abundance, the first fruits of Corne, Wine and Oile, and of all increase of the Field, and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. *Verf. 5.* The like we read of good *Nehemiah*, *Neh. 13. 10, 11, 12.* See the place.

3. For Reformation and Restraint of things which be destructive to what he is bound to maintaine and propagate. And here the Magistrates duty is to restraîne foure evils.

1. The Practise of Idolatry, of this there can be little doubt: *Jehosaphat*, *Hezekiah*, and *Josiah* were great Reformers, *Josiah* put down the Idolatrous Priests whom the Kings of *Judah* had set up to burne incense, &c. (the like did *Hezekiah*. *2 Chro. 31. 1.*) yet Note by the way, that though those Priests which had served in the high places were degraded from doing the office of Priests at Gods Altar any more, yet they did eate the Bread of their God among their Brethren, *2 Kin. 23. 9.* And this was according to the Law. *Levit. 21. Ver. 21, 22.* No man that hath a blemish [and this was typicall.] of the Seed of *Aaron* shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord, yet hee shall eate the Bread of his God. *Verf. 22.* It was not said unto them, *goe dig, goe beg &c.* This I particularly observe, because though some of our Ministers might deserve to be put from their Office, as unfavory Salt, yet they must not be made vagabonds on the earth, nor their Wives and Children beggars: The Reformers under the N. Testament should follow the rule & example of those reformers, in the O. Testament, and this is required of them, *Eze. 44. 11, 13, 14.* At the purging of the new Churches Ministry (there figured under *Ezekiels* Temple) those that had defiled themselves with false worship, were to be degraded from the dignity and office of a Priest, to doe the most servile and meanest offices about the Temple, yet they should have where-

1.



on to live and subsist : This I speake and presse the rather, because as there is a desire in some here present , that the worke of Reformation should proceede and be carried on in a way of righteousnesse and mercy , so there may be a fulfilling of the same to roll away our ( that I say not, your ) reproach.

A second thing to be restrained, is the actuall preaching and spreading of hereticall and poisonous Doctrines : I lay this restraint, not upon the holding of any opinion, though contrary to the publickly owned and established Doctrine, because opinions as opinions, being acts of the minde, are not discernible, and therefore not punishable by humane Authority, yet when such dangerous opinions shall be published to the seducing and infecting of his people, then Christ will not have *jezebel*, the pretended inspired Prophetesse, nor any other of like condition, suffered to seduce his servants. *Rev. 2. 14.* It is cleere, such might be restrained, and in case such false Teachers disregard the censures of the Church, then the Magistrate is in this, to serve Christ, and I thinke he may take those words of *Paul* for his warrant, *Gal. 5. 12.* Note 1. Hee speakes there of false Apostles who had poisoned that Church with some Jewish Doctrines. 2. He calls them troublers of the Church. 3. That such troublers ought to be cut off, else *Paul* would never have wisht it : I doe not understand it of a cutting off of their Lives or Estates, but a restraint of their practice, that they might no longer trouble the Church with their pernicious Doctrines; And the restraint upon them must be so effectually, that they may be as if they were dead, for as long as they persist in their troublesome teaching, they are not cut off. 4. And when the Church has gon as far as it can, and prevails nothing, then *Pauls* wish calls for the Magistrates helpe to restrain them, as evill workers in an high degree, and troublers of the Churches peace, which the Magistrate is bound to preserve. But that place, *Zach. 13. 2, 3, 5.* comes more home to our purpose, I will ( saith the Lord ) cause the Prophets and the unclean spirit to passe out of the Land, And it shall come to passe, that when any shall yet prophecy, then his Father and Mother that begu him, shall say unto him, thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies.

Phil 2. 3.



in the Name of the Lord, &c. This is a plaine prophecy of the times of the Gospell : wherein note, 1. That by the Spirit of God, there is foreshewed a singular evill that should happen in the Christian Churches, viz. men shall beare themselves for Prophets which are none, ( for they shall weare the Prophets garment to deceive. ) 2. Those Prophets are Teachers of falsehood. 3. This evill is to be purged away, and these men brought to shame by the Christian Magistrate : at the instance and complaint of their dearest friends, his Father and Mother shall thrust him through when he prophecieth, not with their own hands, but according to the Law, *Deut. 13. 9.* They shall bring him to the Magistrate to be punished. 4. And this shall be the fruit of the Magistrate dealing with them, viz. they shall be ashamed of their visions, and their prophecyings *Ver. 4. 5.* and shall confesse, *I am no Prophet, &c.*

2 Pet. 2. 1.  
Rev. 2. 14.

Verse 3.

And there is a reason, as Mr. *Burroughs* thinks, why their best friends should withstand them in this their way. 1. Because it is abhorring to nature to suffer that God, whom wee honour, to be blasphemed. 2. And to see our Wives, Children and dearest friends to be seduced into wayes, which wee thinke will undoe their soules to eternity, and not be able to helpe them ; no way left to help our selves or them, unlesse we can perswade the seducer to desist, or aske them why they do so, and intreate them to forbear.

A third sort to be restrained are makers of Sects and Divisions among the people, because this is directly opposite to the Magistrates proper end, viz. publike Peace, and Quiet : The setting up of divisions, Church against Church, Ordinance against Ordinance, does in its owne nature tend to the disturbance of publike peace and humane society ; See the danger of it, *Gal. 5. 15.* If yee bite and devour one another, Take heed yee be not consumed one of another ; if the Church of Christ, which should be as a City at unity within it selfe, shall nourish within its bowells contrary Sects and Divisions, there will be biting and devouring one of another, and the Churches divisions do prove the Churches consumptions.

A fourth sort to be restrained by the Magistrate are vicious livers, to the scandall of the Gospell : Though the loving

of vice be worse than living in vice, yet the Magistrate cannot take notice of the affection, but of the action, to reſtraine open ſins, yea, though they be not peace-diſturbſing enormities; For the Magiſtrates power is not limited to preſervation of Peace and Juſtice onely, as its adequate Object, but is extended to other evill workes and open enormities: "As for example, he is to reſtraine the polluting of the Sabbath by buying and ſelling, as *Nehemiah* did, *cap.* 13. 15, 16. He is to puniſh and reſtraine Drunkenefſe, *Deut.* 21. 20. though it be a harmeleſſe and quiet drunkard: fornication alſo and vaine ſwearing comes within his compaſſ, though the publick peace be not thereby diſturbed: It is very much, you ſee, that the civil power has to do in the things of God. But againſt the Magiſtrates reſtraining power, 3. things are objected,

1 Ob. *May the Magiſtrate reſtraine me of that liberty which Chriſt hath purchaſed?*

*Sol.* No: but Chriſt has not purchaſed a liberty for you to be an Idolater, or an Heretick, or a maker of Sects, or a vicious Liver: Chriſt has not purchaſed a liberty for *Arrius* to deny his Godhead, nor for a Papiſt to worſhip the creature, nor for Husbandmen and keepers of cattell, to be Prophets, nor for any man to endanger the ſalvation of others; Chriſt has not purchaſed a liberty for every man to hold what hee liſt; Nor to ſerve God in his own way, for then ſome ſhould be authorized by Chriſt to blaſpheme God, and to ſerve God by ſinning againſt him. Therefore this reſtraint is juſt, and not againſt chriſtian liberty.

2. Ob. *But as good have no Religion, as no liberty to praſiſe it.*

*Sol.* 1. Not ſo neither, in ſome kinde of things, that of *Paul*, *Rom.* 14. 22. takes place, *haſt thou faith? have it to thy ſelfe*, that is, art thou certainly perſwaded concerning thy liberty in theſe things? content thy ſelfe with knowing it, and with being freed from ſuch ſcruples, yet forbear the praſtiſe, in caſe of offence, *q. d.* Let no man be carried out, upon particular perſwaſion of his conſcience to doe any thing to the hurt of others: reſtraint in praſtiſe may ſtand with Chriſtian liberty.

1 *Cor.* 8. 13.

*Sol.* 2.

*Sol. 2.* It is a sweet priviledge for men of a different minde to enjoy their owne private judgement, under the civil Power, without having it drawne forth, and then punished, when it is made known: It is a sweet Priviledge, though my forme and way be denyed me, yet that I shall not be forced to a positive acting in a way that is contrary to my judgement; for so I enjoy both my civill Quiet, and my inward Peace.

*Sol. 3.* There is no just complaint for want of Liberty, when men may have free accessse unto the use of all establisht Ordinances, which by their own confession are the power of God unto salvation; Againe, no man is cast out of our Communion for his dissenting judgement, unlesse he cast himselfe out; If I were in *New-England*, in *France*, or *Germanie*, I would communicate with any Congregation, that holds Christ the Head, and Faith the Foundation, that holds and believes the Articles of the Creed, and professe Repentance towards God, And any of those Nations should communicate with me upon the same termes. My reason is, because Communion with Christ the Head, and with the Catholique Church, the Body, is the root of Communion with particular Congregations.

1. There is but One Church in the World, One Christ, One Faith, One Baptisme, One Lord over all and in all. 2. Ministers of Christ, are Ministers of the Church where ever they come; we are not Ministers so to one Congregation, as that we cannot exercise ministeriall Acts in another Congregation. 3. The Members also of the Church are all baptised into that one Body, not into this or that Congregation, and so we are all Members one of another. 4. Lastly, All the Members by vertue of their Communion with the Church-Catholique, have a right to the Ordinances all the world over, and in the Ministers where ever they come, if they come where *Cephas* is Pastor, they have a right in him, if where *Paul* and *Apollos* doe officiate, they have a right in them, and why so? because you are Christs: so that the roote of Communion is because I am Christ, and from that Head I have a right in *Apollo's*, and *Cephas*, &c. Look what makes one a Member of the Universall Visible Church, the same serves to make one a Member of any particular Congregation, and such a man hath right to the Ordinances

1 Cor 3. 12.

ordinances every where: So then our Brethren are not straightened by us, but in their owne bowels. And for them to make their owne Conceptions the rule and condition of holding Communion with us, is in effect to impose upon the Magistrate, a necessity of receding from the approved and publicly owned Establishments.

3. *Obj. But we are freed by the late Act, to serve God in our owne way, Why then should wee bee Restrained by the Magistrate?*

*Sol.* That Act frees your Purfes from Penalties indeed, but not your Consciences from Sin: *Moses* allowed a Bill of Divorcement, if any had put away his Wife and married another, without giving such a Bill, it had been death: But now though that Law did exempt the party from punishment, yet not from sinne, and so our Saviour told the Pharisees, from the Beginning it was not so. Thus our Statute of Usury, allowing 8. per cent. if the Question be, Is that Uusury legall? We say, Yes: But if the Question be, Is it lawfull before God? We tell you, Nay: So in this case, you will not sanctifie the Sabbath in the publique Assemblies, if the Question be, Is this separation punishable? That Act tells you, Nay: But if the Question be, Is the Sabbath duly sanctified, and do men sin in forsaking the Assemblies? We tell you, Yea: The Magistrate remits only the penalty, but that is no discharge of Duty before God: Humane powers may mitigate penalties, but they cannot make Sinne to be no Sin, nor Schism to be no Schism. Thus is the Magistrates restraining power vindicated.

4. There is yet one thing more belonging to the Christian Magistrate, and that is a Power to regulate and order Circumstances for the managing of an Ordinance, which in their generall nature are necessary, yet left undetermined in Scripture: as for example, It is necessary in the generall, that some place for publique Worship be chosen, that some houres be appointed, that the Minister use some Garments or other, &c. seeing in such things there must be some way or other used, and yet none is limited in Scripture, therefore the Magistrate may order this houre of 9. and 3. from publique meeting, rather than Sun-rising or Midnight; and for the Place, the Church rather than

a Tav  
Cloak  
chule  
of Ch  
be ob  
Th  
to do  
rectio  
ons, at  
his pe  
No  
Magi  
questi  
and fo  
of thei  
For  
ly refe  
& unl  
for ev  
ment  
and th  
contra  
ferable  
comp  
w 2.  
the fa  
theisti  
to eve  
2 Chro  
Faith  
Laws  
gistrat  
in such  
consci  
forcin  
ence a  
The  
fwer,

aTaverne : and for Habit, a black Gown rather than a white Cloak : the reason is, because that Circumstance, which I may chuse to my selfe, being free so to do, there being no institution of Christ in the thing, the same may the civill power ordain to be observed by all.

Thus you have seen, that it is much that the Magistrate has to do in the things of God. 1. For Propagation : 2. For Protection of the truth. 3. For restraint of Idolatry, Heresie, Divisions, and vicious living. 4. And for setting outward order among his people.

*Now follows the second branch of our Doctrine, viz. what the Magistrate may not do in matters of Religion. And here let the question be, whether the civill power may impose an act of worship, and force men by temporall penalties to act against the convictions of their own conscience (as here Nebu. did the 3. Children?) Neg.*

For answer 2. are to be premised. 1. This question is not rightly resolved by distinguishing between an act of worship lawfull & unlawfull, as if a true Religion might be imposed, not a false; for every act of worship is supposed to be good in the judgement of the imposer, and evill in the judgement of the refuser : and they whose hap it is to live under contrary commands, and contrary Religions, must either have a bad conscience, or a miserable life; a bad conscience, if he can take in all points of the compass, or else a miserable life under such change of penalties.

2. I grant, that the Magistrate may compell such as do hold the faith, & own the worship (yet neglect the same out of an atheisticall profanenes and irreligiousnes,) to present themselves to every such acknowledged act of Gods worship, as *Asa* did, 2 Chron. 15. 13. *that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of their Fathers should be put to death, &c.* Here *Asa* made compulsive Laws about Religion, and let the case be alike, the Christian Magistrate may compell, that is, to a confessed, known duty, because in such compulsion, the Magistrate does not pinch upon the conscience of the party, but upon his disorderly outward man, forcing him to the practise of a duty, which in his own conscience and practice, he confesseth to be a duty.

These things premised, to the question as it is proposed, I answer, that the Magistrate may propose, but not impose; Instruct the Appendix.

crucify, but not destroy men of a different judgement and way; he may reſtraine any false way (which is contrary to that which he takes himſelf bound to maintain.) But not force to a poſitive acting againſt the convictions of their own conſcience, he may not ſet up an Image and a Fornace, he may not ſay, bow, or burne.

Beil. de Laich  
l. 3. c. 12.

*Reaſ. 1.* Becauſe then a false worſhip may be impoſed, as well as the true, and the godly men undone, by reſuſing a false worſhip, as well as carnall people by not obſerving the true: *John Huſſ, nobis catholicis fuit hereticus*, ſaid Bellarmine, and was therefore burned alive at *Conſtance*: looke what reaſons one ſide gives for puniſhing of another, the ſame reaſons are brought by the other ſide to puniſh them againe for the like reſuſall; the ſame argument was uſed againſt *Paul* at *Philippi*, *Acts 16. 21.* [ viz. *He teacheth cuſtomes which are not lawfull for us to obſerve being Romans, and at Athens, Acts 17. 18. He ſetteth forth new Gods* ] which *Paul* himſelf at firſt had uſed, when he perſecuted the Chriſtians.

*Reaſ. 2.* It is againſt the nature of faith and worſhip to be forced: *ſuaderi, non cogi vult ſides: Quis imponet mihi neceſſitatem aut credendi quod nolum, aut quod velim, non credendi* I cannot believe againſt my will, neither can I diſbelieve at my pleaſure, much leſſe at the will and pleaſure of another. So for worſhip, God is not pleaſed with a forced worſhip, God is to be ſerved with a perfect heart, and a willing minde, and whatſoever we performe againſt our will, or with an ill will, grudgingly, or with an unbelieving heart, not being perſwaded of the lawfullneſſe thereof, it is ſin; It is like the cutting off a Dogs neck.

3. *Reaſ.* To impoſe an act of worſhip under bodily puniſhments, to come with an Image and a Fornace, is properly that which we call ſpirituall tyranny over the conſcience, for ſeeing man cannot puniſh the conſcience directly, by an immediate ſtroak [ God alone can wound and heale the conſcience ] therefore all the force and puniſhment done upon the conſcience by men, muſt be by the body: This is properly to force and Tyrannize over the conſcience, when men are brought to this ſtraite, that either the bodily eſtate muſt periſh to ſave the

the conscience whole: or else the conscience must be wounded to save the body, & the estate whole: This is a Lording over mens conscience: This was the sad condition of our Fathers that lived under the lash of *Hen. 8.* his six knotted whip, I meane, the six *Articles*; He came with an Image and a Fornace, if the Papists refused to acknowledge his supremacy, they must be hanged for Traitors. To the Protestants he came with transubstantiation, and a Faggot, if they refused to bow to that breaden Idoll, they must be burnt for Hereticks.

Thus some Bishops requiring subscription too rigidly to all the ceremonies, and silencing the Non-conformists [though men otherwise of quiet spirits, and usefull gifts] were deemed to exercise a spirituall tyranny over mens consciences, because they came with an image and a fornace, subscription, or deprivation.

The like things done by other men in other changes of times, is really the same sin, though the men and names be changed: *Hart-divis.*  
Hereupon Mr. *Burroughs* breakes out into this prayer, God *P. 45.*  
grant we never meddle with any thing answerable to that ty- *P. 63.*  
ranny, and exhorts thus, the tables may turne one day, wherein the sufferers shall have the greatest ease, and the inflictors the forest burthen, but God forbid that their brethren should lay it upon them, though it were put into their power to do it.

*Reas. 4.* Thus to enforce an act of Religion is against the prime dictate of nature, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you the same to them, for this is the Law of nature, and of God by his Prophets.* It is a strange thing to consider how mens spirits and minds do alter with their condition, so as to thinke the same things just or unjust, according as it comes to their turnes to be up, or down, to be above, or beneath: men would not think it equitable to be so dealt with, as they deale now with others: He that sends out groanes for liberty, if hee shall make others groane for lack of the same, though the thing imposed be perhaps just and righteous, yet his act of imposing is most unrighteous, because he sins against the light of nature, *Alteri ne feceris, &c.* and against the light of the Gospell: judge this rather, that no man lay a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brothers way, *Rom. 14. 13.*

I shall now cleere two or three Objections of those that stand



stand for this power of imposing in the Magistrate.

1. Ob. *If Magistrates may not impose, nor compell to a Church profession, then every one may be of what Religion he list.*

*Sol.* No man can be of any other Religion than what himselfe doth list, for Religion is seated in the understanding and will: A Religion which I like not, is not my Religion, though I conforme outwardly to it: An implicate faith to believe what the Church or State believes, meerly because they have agreed upon it, is no faith at all. But if by being of what Religion I list, be understood thus, every one will have his own way, and so we shall nourish all confusions. I Answer, This mischief is prevented by the Magistrates restraining power, who as hee may not inforce you to an act of worship against your mind, so neither will he permit you the exercise of what you list, against his own minde: He will not force you to keep his dayes, or prayers, but you shall keep them, or none at all openly.

2. Ob. *But doth not this non-imposing under temporall penalties, amount to that absolute, wild toleration, which you seeme to condemne?*

*Sol.* No, toleration is taken away by his act of restraining: That which I restraine, I do not tolerate, he that restraines the practice of Idolatry, the spreading of Heresies, &c. cannot be said to tolerate them. This non-imposing is not toleration, but that Christian moderation which should be known to all men.

3. Ob. *But must such dissenters as refuse to act according to authority enioynes, be let alone?*

*Sol.* No: there is a twofold remedy provided. 1. One spirituall for the healing and reducing of persons going astray to false wayes of Doctrine and worship, viz. Instruction, Discipline, and Prayer: spirituall remedies conscientiously applied through Gods blessing will cure spirituall diseases. 2. But if yet the Magistrates restraining power and wisdom (as above described) is a soveraigne remedy, every way commensurable to the suppressing of false worship, and of all civill disorders that may arise thereof.

4. Ob. *Will not this breed contempt of the Civill Power?*

*Sol.* No: Man is not despised, when God is preferred. His Gods prerogative royall to be obeyed in what hee requires



even because he commands it, that is, for his own Authorities sake, Gods Commands are good, because commanded by him: But mens commands are subject to examination, and we owe unto them, not an absolute, but a conditionall obedience, viz. *Ex parte rei*, when the thing enjoined, is not unlawfull. And in such case of non-obedience, the reverence due to authority is preserved by yeilding our bodies to their power in passive Obedience, when wee cannot yeild our soules to their worship in an active Obedience, ( as here these three children did.)

*Use.* I end with foure short Admonitions and Cautions to the party that does dissent, and craves not to be imposed upon, nor forced by temporall punishments to act against the convictions of his own conscience, let him precisely observe these foure Rules.

**Cautiō 1.** Take heed, beware how thou dare pretend conscience for thy non-obedience, when it is something else, as perhaps Pride, Affectation of applause, Humour, Selfe-interest, &c. Do not dare so to abuse thy conscience, as to make it a baude to thy lust, for then humour will be conscience, Pride and Schisme will be conscience, filthy lucre and vaine-glory will be conscience, Selfe-ends and Selfe-interest will be conscience; And so that pretious sparkle of Divine Majesty set up in thy breast to keepe thee in awe of sinne, shall be made a cloake for sinne, to sinne with the more liberty and security. As it is a great sinne to act against the standing indictment of our own conscience, so it is a singular abuse of the omnipotent, holy, sin-revenging God, to plead conscience for the doing, or not-doing of this or that, when as there is nothing lesse than conscience in the busines; — Such a man sinnes with a protection, He has gotten his conscience, yea, God himselfe to be the protectour of his wickednesse; And such men, if they can be discovered, deserve to be twice punished, once for their fault, another time for their holy pretence. 'Tis a great boldnesse to make conscience a Sanctuary for any disorder.

2. Let the dissenting party, though he cannot conforme to the Injunctions of Authority in some point of opinion or wor-

ship, yet carry himselfe so innocently, peaceably, and unoffensively in other respects, that the Magistrate may justifie thee, and have cause to say, *I have no occasion or matter against him, save in the Law of his God, ( as it was said of Daniel, Dan. 6. 5. )*

3. For the manner of refusall, be carefull to carry it in an humble, quiet, Selfe-denying way; do not beare it out with railing, or Pride, or Turbulence of spirit factiously or seditiously: Hee that does dissent from the publikly owned and establisht way, hath great reason to be humble and jealous of his own weaknesse. When a man by reason of his conscience dissents from the civill power, if he can enjoy his owne inward peace and outward quiet, he should discover a very ill spirit to poure contempt and scorne upon the truths of God publikly preached, or to cast dirt upon the wayes which he opposed, or contemne and vilifie those that differ from him.

4. Be sure, practically to put a difference between non-obedience, and disobedience or Rebellion; if thou be required any thing which is contrary to thy judgement, sit downe with a modest non-obedience, But let not thy spirit be carried out to rebell, or to setting up of Image against Image, worship against worship, Assembly against Assembly, in a visible opposition to the publike.

Ob. *And if thy case be such as that of Peter and James, Acts 4. 18. They were commanded not to speake at all, nor to teach in the Name of Iesus, yet they did Ver. 19. because God had commanded them to preach in his Name.*

Sol. Then remember thou art under a double bond of conscience at the same time, one from God, who commands thee to preach; Another from men, who command thee not to Preach; But here in this case, thy conscience is discharged. 1. Unto God by doing what he commands thee, and 2. To the Magistrate by submitting to his power in suffering, And so thy duty to God, and thy reverence due to authority are both preserved. And thus I am brought to my second Doctrine.

Quest. *In case of injurious impositions, what is a Christian to doe?*

Ans. Rather yeild our bodies to the fire, than our conscience

ence to the worship, as these three worthies in my Text did :  
 From whence my second Doctrine is this, viz. To cleave to 2 *Doct.*  
 Gods Will and Wayes against all humane dread and terrour,  
 out of a confident perswasion that he is Lord of our lives, able  
 to deliver, and in an humble Resignation to his Wisdome,  
 whether he will deliver or not, in such a strait, is a strength  
 of spirit to be endeavoured after, by all that feare God, and  
 would keep a good Conscience.

Every circumstance of this Doctrine is grounded on the  
 Answer of *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego* to *Nebuchad-  
 nezar, Vers. 16 17.* To cleave to Gods Will and Wayes [ so  
 did they, *wee will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the Gol-  
 den Image which thou hast set up.* ] Against all humane dread  
 and terrour. [ So did they, *wee are not carefull to answer thee  
 in this matter.* ] Out of faith or a confident perswasion that he  
 is able to deliver [ therefore they said, *our God whom wee  
 serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace* ] and  
 in an humble Resignation to his wisdome, whether he will de-  
 liver in such a strait, or not [ so they said, *hee will deliver us  
 out of thine hand, O King, scil.* if it seeme best to his Godly  
 Wisdome, we are not sure, that hee will deliver us, therefore  
 they expresse their confidence conditionally, [ But if not ] as  
 if they had said, He can, if hee will, if it be for his glory and  
 ours, and the Churches good, deliver us, but for that, we re-  
 signe up our selves to his Will and Wisdome, and resolve to  
 stick to his wayes, and to our duties ; However hee please to  
 dispose of us ] is a strength of spirit, [ it is not every degree of  
 grace that can make a man to do this, ] yet it is to be endea-  
 voured after, and resolved on, by all that feare God, [ for  
 otherwise we should feare a man that shall die, and forget the  
 Lord our Maker, who is able to destroy both Body and Soule in  
 hell, if we deny him before a sinfull Generation of men. ]

But here I must make an end.

Thus I have, I hope, according to promise, in a sober, mo-  
 derate way, unpartially held forth the cleare Minde of God in  
 this great and busie controversie, How we ought to judge, and  
 how to walke between two Opinions, one of them, that bring  
 the Civill Arme to enforce to a conformity under the tempo-  
 rall.

all penalties of Imprisonment, Sequestration, &c. and others, that plead for an absolute freedom from all coercive power of Magistrates in matters of Religion.

The true use of this Discourse lieth in the Practice, which if heeded, will produce this happy fruit, 1. God will have his Glory and true Preheminence over our Soules. 2. The Gospell of Christ, its true Honour and Splendor, being propagated and protected. 3. The Devill and his instruments, their due shame, whilst error is restrained and vice suppressed. 4. The Ministers and Servants of *Iesus Christ* will have their due encouragement and protection. 5. Mens consciences their just Liberty. 6. The Church will enjoy more truth in Power and Purity, and Brethren more Freedom, Love, and Peace among themselves. 7. And many thousand Souls preserved from perishing through dangerous Seduction.

If in these or the like respects any Glory may redound to God, any good to the Church, I shall attaine the end of my Preaching, and you the Fruit of my Sermon.

---

*FINIS.*

---



ers,  
r of  
  
h if  
his  
pell  
ted  
due  
The  
en-  
Li-  
uri-  
em-  
ing  
  
d to  
my